

them in patterns. Bye and bye the child rolls a young snake and then makes patterns with the depressed balls, and rolls, and I know not at this stage whether the pupils or balls are the most depressed.

II., *Design*. This is said to be the principal aim of this Scheme. Under Head I. I think I have shown that this is purely mechanical.

III. *Imagination* is not fostered in the slightest.

IV. Neither is *Texture*.

V. The hand is taught to obey the head, but this only to a very limited extent, and only teaches a few actions instead of a great number.

The pupils are moreover trained to roll their clay on the tables. This ought always to be done between the palms of the hands, so that the child *feels* the modelling.

In this System modelling with the fingers is recommended. The consequence is, that as the fingers are hotter than the thumbs and the tips are smaller, that the clay quickly dries, and the teacher is grieved to find at the end of the lesson that the models are cracked and spoilt. By keeping a wet sponge between two children, and teaching them only to model with their thumbs this difficulty is altogether surmounted.

Train your children, my dear fellow-teachers, to recognise the true and beautiful, and then this wonderful world will be full of keen interest to them, and in the future they will rise up and call you blessed.

MRS. F. STEINTHAL.

"THE ART OF READING."

THE above was the title of a lecture given by the Rev. Professor Shuttleworth last June to the Hyde Park and Bayswater Branch of the P.N.E.U., and when your Editor asked me to send a short article to your Magazine, I thought that some of the ideas I gained from the lecture might be of interest.

It will be difficult for any historian writing about the last quarter of the nineteenth century to put a finger on the predominating sin of the age; but to those living in it, it appears that it is in the terrible rush of life and consequent superficiality of thought that it sins most against humanity. And if we are superficial and scrappy and unsound in anything it is, above all, in our reading. Of the multitude of books there is no end, and of the claims on our time there is indeed no end, and so we read less and less, we remember less of what we do read, and we read almost solely books about books, and if we know the real books of the world at all it is probably only a bowing acquaintanceship and not a deep and lasting friendship.

Prof. Shuttleworth divided the books he recommended us to read into three classes: those which we read for professional purposes, those we read as a means of self-culture and mental improvement, and those which we read purely for relaxation.

Naturally no hard and fast line can be drawn between these three classes of books, but our reading should come under these heads. By professional books are meant those which keep us *directly* with our work—in our case the *Parents' Review* and psychological and educational books generally. Such reading is essential for every teacher and educationalist, but I think a note of warning may well be struck here. We may easily become too groovy as well as too superficial, and where interest is great and enthusiasm keen one's reading is apt to become entirely confined to this class of literature. The books which a teacher reads as preparation for her lessons would come under this head.

It is on the second class of books that Prof. Shuttleworth laid most stress, and where I would directly echo his advice. He pointed out that at our universities the perfect mastery of eight books was required and was considered the equivalent of a liberal education—"The Humanities" as they are called. The word is fraught with meaning: "*Literae Humaniores*."

If we would set ourselves sternly against the ever increasing stream even of excellent books and as a form of self-culture set ourselves to really master eight books, we should be educating ourselves in the true sense of the word. Naturally we should exercise great care and thought in the choice of these books and then we should cultivate the art of reading them. We should acquire the habit of concentrating our attention absolutely on the book we are reading. The power of concentration, which Canon Scott-Holland considers the first test of a good education (*vide "Good's" Parent's Review*, May), is very quickly lost after our school-days are over. So many little thoughts and trivial worries seem to claim our attention. Still the habit must be preserved if we wish to know how to read. Prof. Shuttleworth advocated also the writing of a *resumé* of the work under consideration and fully annotating the pages with references as helps towards absolute mastery of the book. Above all, he assured us that if he had achieved anything in his life he owed it to his having formed in his student days the *habit* of reading two hours a day non-professional books, a habit he had never lost. Few of us can achieve this, but half an hour a day devoted to this class of books should be a possibility for all to attain.

The choice of the eight books to be studied and assimilated must of course be left to the individual reader, and in the choosing lies most of the "art of reading"—some good historian, some great traveller, some great thinker (Carlyle?), and some great poet (Browning?), would probably number among our "very best friends." Also, we should not forget the great writers of other countries whom we should learn to know and love, even if only through translations. No educated man or woman should be a stranger to Greek and Latin writers.

The third class of books, those read as relaxation, is also a most important one and should not in any way be overlooked. Nothing gives more thoroughly the change of thoughts that modern workers require than the reading of a good novel. The stories of to day are not to be despised because they are of to day, and teachers will keep fresher and brighter for their pupils if they keep *as courteous* with modern thought as depicted in the best literature. Naturally

there is one type of modern novel which one would avoid, but much amusement and refreshment can be found in such writers as Barrie, Crockett, Ian Maclaren (we are very Scotch now-a-days), Mary Wilkins, Miss Barlow, Mrs. Francis, Anthony Hope, Stanley Weyman, &c. These are all writers of short stories, and busy folk are very grateful to those authors who can produce a real work of art in a small compass. This list does not in any way pretend to be exhaustive and omits many of the more serious modern novelists. Still it is after all to the older authors that we shall mostly go even for our lightest reading. Personally, I think that an hour with Jane Austin is one of the most delightful antidotes to the rush and fever of modern life. One refuses to be hustled and hurried when leaving her quiet peaceful calm.

As I said before, it is impossible to divide off the three classes of books of which I have spoken with any hard line of demarcation, the one overlaps the other. The lightest and brightest story, if we have chosen well and among real writers, must improve us both professionally and generally. Jane Austin and the best novelists, modern as well as classical, will help us in writing and speaking good pure English, besides giving food for imagination and thought, subject-matter for table-talk, illustrations for lessons.

We who are P.N.E.U. members immediately try and adapt any new idea to the children's needs; and usually it is in our efforts for the children that our own character is strengthened and our horizon widened. The habit of daily reading cannot be formed too early. If the children have a fixed time for being read to, even half an hour a day will enable a whole store-house of good literature to be opened up to them before they are in their teens. Mr. Somervell, in his article "*Lessons before School*" (June *P.R.*), speaks of the power of attention and narration thus gained, but the love of literature is even a greater gain. Children of eight and nine will delight in Chaucer (Mrs. Haweis' edition, or Pitt-Taylor *Chaucer for Children*), Shakespeare, and Tennyson, and the many books recommended in the *P.R.* School. We may at least hope that the children who start with such reading will not become the chief supporters of such papers as *Tit-Bits*, *Answers*, *Scraps*, &c., or such literature as *The Family Story-Teller Series*, &c., to the existence of which one's fellow railway-travellers usually introduce us.

House of Education students have often heard that nothing is too good for the children, and those who have tried reading good authors to their pupils will thoroughly endorse this. Let them

never get hold of the bad or trashy, not by forbidding it, but by making them love the good and noble. I think a column recommending books for the children and adults might with advantage fill a corner of your Magazine. Naturally children should also have their books of fairy tales and adventures as well as the more solid reading, but space forbids my dwelling on that as well as on that other and distinct "art of reading," the art of clear and correct enunciation and true expression.

H. F.

SHORT SKETCH OF THE GROWTH OF NATURE-POETRY FROM THE TIME OF POPE.

"ALL Nature is but Art unknown to thee" is the impassive statement of Pope, nor does he help one by his writings to find "the life . . . that warbles through the vernal flood." It is not to such a poet as Pope that a lover of Nature turns for words to express "the new, deeper feelings of the universe"—for descriptions harmonising with thoughts inspired by a loving gaze upon what Kingsley calls "the countenance of God," and Goethe "the open secret." Rather under the influence of the exquisite poesy of Spring does one feel the touch of truest sympathy with Nature in such lines as those of Wordsworth:

"To me the mearest flower that blows, can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

And yet Pope gives us in that line of his a great Truth. All Nature is Art, and to many of us who feel that a closer acquaintance with her wonders brings an ever deepening realisation of our ignorance, she does seem almost "unknown." Yet, how much less unknown to us who, living in these days, can drink in the delights of Cowper and Coleridge, of Shelley and Byron, of Wordsworth and Tennyson, not to mention a host of others, than to our ancestors of the first half of the eighteenth century!

But how has this change in the spirit of poetry come about? Is this revelling in the sweets of Nature a phenomenon of sudden birth, or has it been gradually and silently growing up in our

Literature? Slowly and steadily the love for, and close observance of, Nature have been taking their place in our national poetry, and it will be the object of these short papers to endeavour, however imperfectly, to trace that growth.

Just as the study of History and Biography reveals the working of certain Laws of Development in the character of nations and of individuals, so does a study of the works of our Nature Poets in chronological order, with due reference to the national history of their times, show the working of the same Laws. In a most delightful and instructive chapter on "The Teachings of the Pine-Cone," the Rev. Hugh Macmillan has shown how the figure of the *spiral*, which he calls "the highest of all forms," and which is so marked in the construction of the Pine-Cone, is predominant throughout Nature. "The spiral," he says, "is the circle infinitely continued,—identified with no department of creation in particular, but a cosmical law." And it would seem to be in accordance with some such Law as this that these Nature Poets of ours have gradually drawn the spirit of man *outward* and *upward* until (to quote the words of our late Poet-Laureate) we see "the whole earth bound with gold chains about the feet of God."

There was but little love of Nature for her own sake in the poets of the Tudor period, and indeed to our ancestors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in the few years when their passionate natures were not absorbed in a hand-to-hand struggle for religion for fatherland, for liberty, and for home, the town as opposed to the country was "the centre and circumference" of work and interests. When in men's ears rang the call to war and party strife, what influences were left to foster the gentler and more peaceful art of Nature-Song?

But, "the old order changeth," and with the Restoration came a time of at least partial peace, and men had leisure and inclination for researches in many branches of Science. The Royal Society founded in the time of Charles II. aided much in opening up the vast fields of Natural Science. Astronomy, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Vegetable Physiology, and Mineralogy all claimed the attention of able scientists, and Pope only expressed what must have come to be a very general idea of his time when he said "All Nature is but Art unknown to thee." He was the great exponent of the critical school of Poetry, and though in this line, from his *Essay on Man*, he may be said to have given the "leading note," it is not until the closing years of his life that others began to write in the fresh key, and work out the exquisite harmonies of Nature.